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Human resources management

Human resources management reform, monitoring capacity in the Office of Human Resources Management, consultants and individual contractors, and employment of retired former staff

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the reports of the Secretary-General on consultants and individual contractors (A/57/310), on employment of retired former staff (A/57/413), on monitoring capacity in the Office of Human Resources Management (A/57/276) and on human resources management reform (A/57/293). During its consideration of the reports, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information.

Consultants and individual contractors

2. The report of the Secretary-General on consultants and individual contractors for the year 2001 (A/57/310) is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/221 of 7 April 1999. The Advisory Committee welcomes the report and notes that the information and analysis contained therein would permit the Committee and the General Assembly to monitor this type of personnel services, which normally is not clearly explained in the United Nations proposed programme budgets. The Committee notes that during the reporting period, the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) was still being installed in certain offices away from Headquarters and it was not possible to present IMIS-based information on a worldwide basis. The report therefore was issued with some delay and includes data from legacy systems for the earlier part of 2001 and from IMIS for the latter part of the reporting period (A/57/310, para. 2). **The Committee trusts that for 2002, with the installation of IMIS in offices away from Headquarters, the problem will not recur and the report will be issued at a much earlier date. The Committee intends to use the content of the report for 2002 during its examination of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005. In this connection,**



the Committee expects that programme managers will be informed¹ and able to justify their own requirements for consultants and individual contractors.

3. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 5 to 7 and table 1 of the report that the number of consultants and individual contractors increased in 2001, as compared with recalibrated data for 2000. The Committee was provided with data for 2000 on contracts with consultants and individual contractors, as compared with 2001, as follows (see also annexes I and II to the present report):

	2000	2001
Contracts with consultants (number of persons)	3 054	3 300
Contracts with individual contractors (number of persons)	1 314	1 497
Total consultants and individual contractors	4 368	4 797
Contracts with consultants (number of contracts)	4 173	4 204
Contracts with individual contractors (number of contracts)	2 471	2 939
Total number of contracts	6 644	7 143
Contracts with consultants (fees in \$ million)	\$33.1	\$36.6
Contracts with individual contractors (fees in \$ million)	8.8	10.3
Total fees (\$ million)	\$41.9	\$46.9

4. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 9 and table 3 of the report that 48.5 per cent of the total number of contracts issued in 2001 were for administrative services (20.2 per cent for consultants and 28.3 per cent for individual contractors), while a very limited number of contracts were issued in 2001 for substantive programme activities in the budget (0.8 per cent for programme planning, 1.2 per cent for programme evaluation, 5.2 per cent for analytical studies and 9.2 per cent for programme implementation). **In the view of the Committee, the number of contracts issued for administrative services is excessive as compared with those issued for substantive programme areas. There is a need to review this matter carefully.**

5. Table 2 of the annex to the report provides a breakdown of consultants and individual contractors by nationality in 2001. Although consultants were engaged from 156 countries, 19 countries accounted for 51.8 per cent of all consultants; individual contractors came from 116 countries, although 11 countries accounted for 66.5 per cent of all individual contractors. The Advisory Committee notes that more than 50 per cent of the persons engaged in 2001 were from developed countries. **The Committee requests that the matter be reviewed with a view to engaging more consultants and individual contractors from developing countries and from countries with economies in transition.**

6. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 10 and table 4 of the report that the largest occupational group for individual contractors in 2001 is translators and revisers (256 persons). It further notes that a large number of contracts for consultants and individual contractors issued in 2001 under the occupational group "support related to professional, managerial and technical occupation" were for many clerical and administrative support services, including secretarial support (109 persons), typing (47 persons), text processing (7 persons), messenger services (26 persons) and filing (1 person). **The foregoing statistics point to a potential**

problem in the use of special service agreements. The Committee intends to follow up on this in the context of its consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

Employment of retired former staff

7. The report of the Secretary-General is submitted pursuant to General Assembly decision 51/408 of 4 November 1996, requesting the Secretary-General to report every two years on all aspects of the use of retired former staff. The report includes information for the biennium 2000-2001 on the possible revision of the ceiling on annual earnings of retirees and provides information concerning retired former staff recruited on a short-term basis. As requested by the Committee (A/53/691, para. 10), the report also includes statistics on persons who have retired after age 60 or 62 but have been re-employed for a period for six months or more.

8. In its decision 51/408, the General Assembly decided to set a ceiling across the board of \$22,000 per calendar year, representing an amount updated from the \$12,000 limit set by the Assembly in 1982, for the employment of retired staff in receipt of a pension benefit from the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, with the exception of language-services staff, for whom the ceiling will be \$40,000 per calendar year, and to limit such employment to no more than six months per calendar year.

9. As indicated in paragraph 9 of the Secretary-General's report, when the General Assembly adopted its decision 51/408, the daily rate for freelance interpreters in New York was \$355, which made possible the employment of freelance interpreters for up to 112 days (or six months). Because of cost-of-living adjustments, the current daily rate for interpreters is now \$391.50, which makes possible the employment of freelance interpreters for only up to 102 days before reaching the ceiling of \$40,000 per calendar year. For the reasons explained in paragraphs 8 to 10 of the report, it is proposed that to meet the requirements of language staff of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services (currently the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management), retired freelance language staff be allowed to work for up to 125 workdays per calendar year, which would be equivalent, at the current daily rate of \$391.50, to the amount of \$48,937.50 per calendar year. The Advisory Committee was informed that the number of workdays proposed represents one half of the 250 workdays available in the calendar year.

10. The Advisory Committee concurs in the proposal of the Secretary-General to set the maximum limit on the employment of retired language staff in terms of workdays rather than as a dollar amount. The Advisory Committee therefore recommends that the maximum limit be set at 125 workdays per year. In so doing, it will not be necessary in the future to consider frequent revisions to the limit in order to accommodate cost-of-living adjustments to the daily rate.

11. The Advisory Committee welcomes the statistics and analysis provided in part III of the report for the biennium 2002-2001. **The Committee recommends that, in future, a trend analysis be included in the report, with corresponding statistical data shown in the tables of the annex to the report for the last biennium. Moreover, the pay or grade of the retirees should be explained more clearly in the tables.**

12. The Advisory Committee notes that, within the breakdown of the use of retired former staff by department or office, language services in the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services accounted for 26.2 per cent of the engagement, making the Department the single largest user of retired staff (A/57/413, para. 12). The Committee understands that retired former language staff have been recruited from a limited number of countries. **The Committee requests that, in future, the breakdown by nationality and gender (see A/57/413, para. 13, and annex, table 4) also show the language staff component separately. The Committee believes that a greater effort should be made to recruit retired former language staff from a wider geographical area and, wherever feasible, to use them in a remote role, rather than run the additional expense of bringing them to a United Nations centre, bearing in mind the need for adequate resources for in-house revision.**

13. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 18 of the report that the use of retired former staff in language services decreased in the biennium 2000-2001 in the number of engagements, number of days worked and fees and salaries, as compared with the biennium 1998-1999, while in administrative services, the use of retired former staff increased in 2000-2001 in the number of engagements, number of days worked and total cost, as compared with the biennium 1998-1999. **The Committee requests that in future the reasons for these changes be explained.**

14. The Advisory Committee recalls that whenever a vacancy occurs, there is no dearth of new applicants. For example, in table A.27C.10 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, for the biennium 2000-2001, 50,000 applications were projected for 720 vacancies at the Professional level and higher and for the biennium 2002-2003, 70,000 applications were projected for 700 vacancies. **The Committee reiterates its view that programme managers should not use their inability to plan for vacancies and process applications in a timely manner as an excuse to engage retired personnel (see A/56/7, para. 135).**

Monitoring capacity in the Office of Human Resources Management

15. The report of the Secretary-General is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/258 of 14 June 2001. The report outlines a plan to build increased capacity in the Office of Human Resources Management to improve its effectiveness in monitoring all relevant activities in the Secretariat regardless of the source of funding. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 20 of the report that it is the intention of the Secretary-General to continue current monitoring activities within the constraints of available resources and to adjust resources to new functions so as to develop organizational capacity to fully meet the goal of achieving the comprehensive approach for monitoring described in the report. **The Committee intends to revert to this matter in the context of its review of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.**

Human resources management reform

16. The report of the Secretary-General is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/258 on human resources management and its decision 56/462 on young professionals. The report outlines the progress achieved and planned future activities in each of the major initiatives for reform submitted by the Secretary-

General in his report of 1 August 2000 on human resources management reform (A/55/253).

17. The Advisory Committee notes that the information on achievements reported to date on the major initiatives of the human resources management reform (A/57/293, section III) and other specific issues which are cross-cutting in nature (A/57/293, section IV) cover the experience of the Secretariat for a rather short period. **In the Committee's opinion, the Secretary-General should report in a comprehensive manner on the achievements of the human resources management reform when sufficient information is available on the experiences of the Secretariat with the implementation of the reform initiatives as implemented within the prerogative of the Secretary-General or as approved by the General Assembly. The report, which should cover relevant activities of the Secretariat regardless of the source of funding, should be submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.**

18. The Advisory Committee was informed of the intention of the Secretariat to streamline further the reports of the Secretary-General on human resources management, including via publication of more data on the Intranet. **The Committee trusts that such streamlining will take into account the Committee's previously stressed concern for the need to report in an analytical manner, providing sufficient statistical data in support of the analyses and conclusions in the reports.**

Annex I

Summary data (baseline) on contracts with consultants and individual contractors, 2001 and 2000

	NUMBER OF PERSONS		% OF TOTAL SUBTOTAL		NUMBER OF CONTRACTS		% OF TOTAL SUBTOTAL		DAYS WORKED		FEES (\$000)	
	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000
Contracts with Consultants	3 300	3 054	68.8	69.9	4 204	4 173	58.9	62.8	321 786	263 623	36 630	33 086
Women	886	828	26.8	27.1	1 156	1 144	27.5	27.4	86 246	75 909	8 329	9 024
Former Staff												
Retirees	47	51	1.4	2.7	62	79	1.5	1.9				
Non-retired former staff age 60 or over	37	190	1.1	10.5	49	241	1.2	5.8				
Non-retired former staff under age 60	149	16	4.5	2.3	216	18	5.1	2.5				
Contracts with Individual Contractors	1 497	1 314	31.2	30.1	2 939	2 471	41.1	37.2	181 305	130 270	10 326	8 857
Women	758	662	50.6	50.4	1 502	1 320	51.1	53.4	91 382	63 322	5 142	4 104
Former Staff												
Retirees	22	33	1.5	2.5	38	54	1.3	2.2				
Non-retired former staff age 60 or over	27	75	1.8	5.7	38	115	1.3	4.7				
Non-retired former staff under age 60	82	8	5.5	0.6	183	11	6.2	0.4				
Consultants and Individual Contractors	4 797	4 368	100	100	7 143	6 644	100	100	503 091	393 893	46 956	41 943
Level of Education												
Doctorate or equivalent	1 399	703	29.2	16.1								
Master's degree or equivalent	1 691	2 136	35.3	48.9								
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	964	956	20.1	21.9								
Less than Bachelor's degree	303	290	6.3	6.6								
Not Available	440	283	9.2	6.5								
Evaluation of performance												
Excellent					2 743	2 338	38.4	35.2				
Good					3 552	3 544	49.7	53.3				
Adequate					148	205	2.1	3.1				
Not Adequate					6	6	0.1	0.1				
Not Available					694	551	9.7	8.3				

Annex II

Expenditure on consultants and individual contractors by source of funding, 2000 and 2001

The following abbreviations are listed in the present annex:

DDA	Department for Disarmament Affairs
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DGAACS	Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services
DM	Department of Management
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPI	Department of Public Information
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DPKO/FALD	Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Field Administration and Logistics Division
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EOSG	Executive Office of the Secretary-General
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
ICTY	International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
ICTR	International Tribunal for Rwanda
INTERORG	Inter-organizational bodies: Joint Inspection Unit; High-level Committee on Management; International Computing Centre; Information Systems Coordination Committee
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODCCP	Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OLA	Office of Legal Affairs
OSG	Office of the Secretary-General
OSRSGCAC	Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
UNCC	United Nations Compensation Commission
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFIP	United Nations Fund for International Partnerships

UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNMOVIC	United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission
UNOG	United Nations Office at Geneva
UNOIP	United Nations Office of the Iraq Programme
UNON	United Nations Office at Nairobi
UNOSC	Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator
UNOV	United Nations Office at Vienna
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission

Department or Office	Consultants						Individual Contractors						Total					
	Assessed Contributions			Extra- budgetary			Assessed Contributions			Extra- budgetary			Assessed Contributions			Extra- budgetary		
	(Thousands of United States dollars)			(Thousands of United States dollars)			(Thousands of United States dollars)			(Thousands of United States dollars)			(Thousands of United States dollars)			(Thousands of United States dollars)		
	2001	2000	Total	2001	2000	Total	2001	2000	Total	2001	2000	Total	2001	2000	Total	2001	2000	Total
DDA	28	64	140	112	40	104	16	0	11	3	27	3	44	64	122	43	166	197
DESA	1 629	1 003	6 714	5 085	5 607	6 610	49	65	16	26	65	91	1 678	1 067	5 101	5 633	6 779	6 700
DGAAACN	86	87	0	0	86	87	219	184	0	9	219	193	305	270	0	9	305	280
DM	1 170	1 375	87	104	1 256	1 479	503	621	204	134	707	755	1 672	1 996	291	238	1 963	2 234
DPA	1 734	665	213	235	1 947	899	0	86	42	39	42	124	1 734	750	255	273	1 989	1 024
DPI	92	143	74	20	165	162	878	987	378	308	1 255	1 295	969	1 130	451	327	1 420	1 457
DPKO	62	150	478	287	540	436	0	0	75	48	75	48	62	150	553	335	615	485
DPKOTALD	0	0	0	22	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	0	22
ECA	1 229	1 123	1 327	1 247	2 556	2 369	835	619	244	651	1 080	1 270	2 064	1 742	1 571	1 898	3 635	3 639
ECE	199	64	337	242	535	305	1	1	6	2	7	3	200	64	342	244	542	308
ECLAC	549	167	2 408	1 100	2 957	1 267	660	244	1 442	266	2 101	510	1 208	411	3 850	1 366	5 058	1 777
EOSG	0	53	0	208	0	261	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	53	0	223	0	276
ESCAP	453	203	1 083	1 368	1 536	1 571	91	84	134	92	255	176	544	287	1 217	1 460	1 761	1 747
ESCSA	324	191	67	173	390	365	480	133	103	50	582	183	803	324	169	223	972	547
RSC	0	0	98	93	98	93	0	0	0	12	0	12	0	0	98	105	98	105
ICTY	0	1 949	0	18	0	1 967	0	758	0	44	0	802	0	2 707	0	62	0	2 769
INTERORG	0	0	24	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	0	24	0
ICTR	0	14	0	0	0	14	0	124	0	35	0	158	0	137	0	35	0	172
OECHA	30	152	1 104	757	1 134	909	7	33	53	54	60	87	37	185	1 157	812	1 194	997
ODCCP	76	6	23	173	99	179	0	0	0	6	0	6	76	6	23	179	99	185
OHCHR	155	131	586	564	741	695	155	9	92	5	247	13	310	140	678	568	988	708
OHSS	105	30	2	2	107	32	5	2	0	3	5	5	310	32	2	5	112	38
OLA	109	40	10	0	118	40	56	34	0	0	56	34	164	74	10	0	174	74
OSG	52	0	145	0	197	0	14	0	40	0	54	0	66	0	185	0	251	0
OSRSGAC	0	0	136	0	136	0	0	0	23	0	23	0	0	0	159	0	159	0
UNCC	0	0	4 715	179	4 715	179	0	11	0	0	0	11	0	11	4 715	179	4 715	190
UNCHS	30	0	792	0	822	0	13	0	61	0	74	0	43	0	853	0	896	0
UNCTAD	392	953	3 354	5 722	3 746	6 675	35	188	525	842	560	1 030	427	1 141	3 879	6 564	4 307	7 705
UNEP	23	13	2 437	1 202	2 460	1 215	0	7	375	168	375	175	23	20	2 812	1 370	2 835	1 390
UNFIP	0	0	39	0	39	0	0	0	24	0	24	0	0	0	62	0	62	0
UNITAR	0	0	318	260	318	260	0	0	28	1	28	1	0	0	347	261	347	261

Department or Office	Consultants						Individual Contractors						Total					
	Assessed Contributions		Extra- budgetary		Total		Assessed Contributions		Extra- budgetary		Total		Assessed Contributions		Extra- budgetary		Total	
	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000
	(Thousands of United States dollars)						(Thousands of United States dollars)						(Thousands of United States dollars)					
UNMOVIC	0	0	35	0	35	0	0	0	34	0	34	0	0	0	68	0	68	0
UNOG	297	103	386	607	684	710	883	516	415	282	1 298	798	1 180	619	801	890	1 981	1 509
UNOIP	0	0	1 967	1 558	1 967	1 558	0	0	30	36	30	36	0	0	1 997	1 594	1 997	1 594
UNON	0	178	122	2 237	122	2 415	80	41	804	774	884	815	80	219	927	3 011	1 007	3 230
UNOSG	0	0	61	0	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	61	0	61	0
UNOV	41	15	146	109	187	124	63	43	130	103	193	146	104	58	276	212	380	270
UNSCOM	0	0	0	17	0	17	0	0	0	20	0	20	0	0	0	37	0	37
N/A	0	5	0	10	0	15	0	23	0	18	0	41	0	28	0	28	0	56
Total	8 865	8 872	27 771	24 161	36 632	33 034	5 043	4 811	5 289	44 047	10 330	8 858	13 903	13 683	33 056	28 208	46 959	41 892

Note: Fees only. Data on expenditures are derived from IMIS departments and offices at United Nations Headquarters in New York and from individual updates submitted by offices away from Headquarters to the Paradox database of the Office of Human Resources Management.